

# Lawn & Garden Care Tips

## from the RDNO

When landscaping, make environmentally friendly choices that help reduce water bills and make for an easier yard to maintain.

**Plan** – Avoid hills as the lawn can dry out quickly and sprinkled water runs away from the roots. Think about terracing. Dealing with a high traffic spot where grass just won't grow? Try stepping stones surrounded by a low-maintenance groundcover like Wooley Thyme. Plant in the fall or spring to avoid the summer sun and give new plants/seeds a better start.

**Minimize Lawn** – Think about how much lawn you actually use. Other groundcovers like Creeping Jenny or low maintenance shrubs may be a better choice. Making room for shade trees will keep temperatures lower and reduce evaporation. Shrubs provide visual interest and need little maintenance compared to weekly grass mowing.

**Group Like with Like** - Plants with similar water needs should be planted together. Higher water need plants like hanging baskets should be closer to the home so they are easier to hand water frequently while more drought tolerant plants can be irrigated separately.

**Plants** – Pick low water demand plants suited to your climate to avoid maintenance headaches. Happy plants make for happy gardeners! Visit [www.makewaterwork.ca](http://www.makewaterwork.ca) for waterwise plant ideas.

**Compost and Mulch** - Mulching can cut evaporation by half. Use mulch like bark




chips, hay, grass clippings, or leaves to avoid heat gain associated with rock mulch. Compost will promote water penetration and retention. Lawns can be top dressed with compost in the fall (sprinkle ½ inch and rake over grass) to improve the soil over time.

**Don't Over-mow** - Set your lawn mower one notch higher to make your lawn more drought-tolerant.

**Water Wisely** - Water at night or in the early morning, when wind is low. Irrigate lawns to provide a good soaking (about 1 inch of water per a week). Place a shallow pie plate under your sprinkler and time to fill, then it is time to turn off the sprinkler or move it. Avoid run-off - if there are puddles, water for a shorter period then take a break and water again later that day (e.g. 15 min. in morning and 15 min. in evening).

**Experience Helps** - Irrigation professionals understand the latest technologies and local conditions. Look for Irrigation Industry Association of B.C. Certified Irrigation Technicians.

**Leaks** - Check your water meter when no water is being used. If the meter numbers change, or you see the red leak dial/triangle move, you probably have a leak. Check your irrigation system for pooling and clogged, misaligned, or missing sprinklers monthly. 

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